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ABSTRACT

A rationale and series of steps are provided for use by local school districts in Iowa in developing a teacher evaluation program. The four basic questions to be asked by teacher evaluation program planners are: (1) What shall be our criteria of desired teacher performance? (2) How high shall our standards be? (3) How do we want to measure and report the attainment of our criteria and standards? and (4) How shall we help teachers improve after the initial evaluation? Practical answers including a 30 item list of research based teacher performance criteria are provided by a team of Iowa State University professors. Methodological recommendations include: (1) a three year developmental cycle, (2) careful attention to bargaining law, and (3) deliberately seeking the cooperation and understanding of teachers. (Author/STS)

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DEVELOPING A TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM AS MANDATED BY SENATE FILE 205 (IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1976)

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Developing a Teacher Performance Evaluation System

As Mandated by SF 205 (Iowa General Assembly 1976)

The Iowa General Assembly modified procedures for terminating the contract of a teacher in Iowa (Section 279.13, Code of Iowa) by passing H 6559 amending SF 205, May 1, 1976, effective July 1, 1976. The intent was to establish fair dismissal practices for all certified employees of a school district (and nurses employed by the board) excluding superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals.

In addition, the General Assembly passed HF 1582 relating to the issuance, continuance and termination of school administrator's contracts. The new Iowa laws do not require performance evaluation of principals and superintendent--but good management practices would strongly advise it. Indeed many far-sighted districts have even initiated systematic performance evaluation of board members (going beyond the customary election-time review).

A key provision of SF 205 mandates that, "The board shall establish evaluation criteria and shall implement evaluation procedures." Moreover, "If an exclusive bargaining representative has been certified, the board shall negotiate in good faith with respect to evaluation procedures."

This change in the law makes clear that the management of the school district (the board and the administration) shall have the power (management prerogative) to establish the criteria or standards of evaluation. This is the "quality control" of the school district. Only procedures for evaluation must be negotiated. School management must make this important distinction between "criteria" and "procedures".

The legislative process has been completed--now it is time for the boards and administrators of Iowa districts to develop, redevelop or refine performance evaluation systems which are valid, reliable and now discriminatory under the provisions of the law. How do you evaluate performance of professsionls such as nurses and teachers? How do you improve performance after evaluation? Can evaluation be linked to staff development to raise the quality of education in our schools?

A team of Iowa State University professors has spent several years working on these questions.[1] Several practical answers have been found. It is beyond the scope of this brief report to explore all of the approaches, instead a terse rationale and a streamlined series of steps for local district use has been provided.

Rationale

Two general approaches have been used--teacher performance evaluation (which we refer to as TPE) and input-process-output (IPO). Now IPO is the industrial model and is the dream of every school patron who runs a business--even if he's never been able to "do it personally." IPO presents at least two difficulties: (a) the crude measuring devices we have for what the kids bring in, i.e., IQ, nature/nurture, reading ability, and (b) how to portion out what one teacher, "Suzy Mussen," is doing for Johnny or Mary. It is estimated that about 10 percent of any year's gain may be attributed to the teacher one has now. Basic research is being done on IPO--but it is prototypic and more suitable for university study than for school district practice.

[1]Ross Engel, Dick Manatt, Jack Menne and Tony Netusil

So the ISU team, and other knowledgeable persons like Peck and Veldman at the University of Texas, suggest the use of Teacher Performance Evaluation since (a) it can measure and observe teacher performance and (b) it can infer that high teacher performance results in high student gains.

Methods for TPE

When we endeavor to "evaluate teachers" bear in mind that some things you can "measure" and some things you can only "judge." Essentially, to evaluate we must answer four questions with our methodology:

(1) What shall be our criteria of desired teacher performance?
(2) How high shall our standards be?
(3) How do we want to measure and report the attainment of our criteria and standards?
(4) How shall we help teachers improve after the initial evaluation?

Recommended Methodology

A district would be hard-pressed to develop full-blown a new TPE system before March 15, 1977 (the deadline for notification of teacher contract termination). Therefore, school districts should continue to use their present evaluation system during the 1976-1977 school year while gearing up to substantially improve the existing TPE machinery or to create a new system. If the board has not adopted a policy covering evaluation it should do so. During the improvement process, most districts use a three-year developmental cycle; namely, Year one--develop the prototype; Year two--field test the prototypic model with a sample of the staff and make necessary corrections; Year three--implement the improved system with the total faculty.

Get one thing straight--a checklist or a rating-scale is not enough--either to meet the demands of the Iowa dismissal statute or to improve instruction in your district. Listen to George Redfern (the father of modern TPE),

> Traditionally, evaluation has been primarily a rating process. The teacher is observed and rated, using checklists or rating scales. The evaluator is like an umpire calling balls and strikes. It is essentially a one-way process.
>
> Ratings, however, are inadequate because the concept of traditional rating presumes that the evaluator can make complete evaluative judgments even though performance data may be incomplete; performance objectives often are not well defined and what is considered a successful performance can vary considerably between the evaluator and the teacher.

The approach presented here is intended to overcome these shortcomings.

Teaching performance should be measured in terms of carefully developed success criteria. Those criteria have been the special focus of much of the ISU Research. In addition, a careful linkage between the observation/rating portion of the evaluation process and supervision to improve performance must be made. The linkage problem, in our opinion, makes it essential that principals and other first-line supervisors be given intensive (and continuing) inservice training for evaluation. These are skills that can be taught, learned and sharpened.

1. Launching the TPE Developmental Process

It is essential that the staff fully understand the purpose and rationale of TPE. These many activities and efforts are to determine the level of a teacher performance, to improve the quality of the educational program and for other purposes consistent with the administration of the school district. To assure that evaluations can be used for varied management functions, any stated purpose should not restrict the use school management can make of the product of evaluation.

The board of education, administrative team, and the teachers should view this task as a great opportunity to work together to build a top-quality, instructional delivery system for your district. The understanding and cooperation of the teachers should be deliberately sought. To overlook this important step could cost countless hours of valuable time later.

A district-wide evaluation committee should be formed as the means of designing, developing and instituting the evaluation program. It is important to make the committee broadly representative of all classifications of the faculty. Often a board member or two and some parents or other citizens are included. Students have served well in many instances. If sufficiently large, the committee may be divided into subgroups to develop the various components of the program. Chairpersons of the various committees may constitute a steering committee. A representative of the administration and a teacher often serve as co-chairpersons for the total project.

A school board, administration, and any committee that is established, must recognize the difference between evaluation criteria, which are non-negotiable, and evaluation procedures, which are negotiable under the bargaining law. PERB has ruled that the evaluation instrument is not negotiable except insofar as it sets out evaluation procedures, and then in that instance, it must be consistent with the procedures negotiated. Bettendorf Community School District and Bettendorf Education Association, PERB Case Nos. 598 and 602. PERB stated:

> "We believe 'evaluation procedures' must necessarily be read less inclusively than had Section 9 simply stated 'evaluations.' In the context of collective bargaining, we must balance the employer's inherent right to evaluate against the employees' interest in the evaluation process. In this context, we perceive that management has sole discretion to evaluate its employees and determine the substance or essence of that evaluation. In other words, management has the right to establish the criteria or standards upon which its employees shall be evaluated. Employees, in our opinion, have the right to negotiate the procedure or manner by which management's evaluation of them is accomplished."

Insofar as the school district is under the duty to bargain over evaluation procedures, great care must be taken not to bypass a certified employee organization's designated bargaining representative, or to unilaterally establish evaluation procedures absent negotiations. In some instances, it may not always be easy to distinguish when conversation drifts from "criteria" to "procedures." An awareness of the distinction, however, must be kept in mind to avoid potential legal problems.

For example, the Hearing Officer in Iowa Western Community College Higher Education Association and Iowa Western Community College, PERB Case No. 706, ruled that a proposal was permissive which dealt with the right of an employee to review the personnel file, but that the proposal was mandatory to the extent it related to 'access to current or previous evaluations.' In the same decision, the contents of the personnel file were held not negotiable in its entirety because the public employer must have the exclusive right to determine what types of information it needs to make informed personnel decisions.

Again, in the same decision, the Hearing Officer found permissive a proposal which would have given the employee the right to respond to all materials contained in the personnel file and to any materials to be placed in the file in the future, but the Hearing Officer also ruled that insofar as such responses might relate to evaluations in the file, the subject matter of the proposal was mandatory.

Additionally, in the same case, it was mandatory to negotiate over a proposal that any complaints directed toward an employee placed in the personnel file shall be promptly called to the teacher's attention in writing. Likeiwse, proposals relating to personnel file reproduction and distribution of information in personnel file to outside parties, were held to be permissive as written because they encompassed all the contents of the file, but they were mandatory subjects of negotiations to the extent they related to current or previous evaluations.

These examples should be of assistance as guidelines to boards and management teams and committees which are dealing with evaluation criteria and procedures, and this is an area where school district counsel and the staff of the Association of School Boards should be consulted for assistance in making determinations as to what is negotiable and what is not negotiable. Also, a current knowledge of the state of PER Board decisions and court rulings will be essential during the time it will take this law to develop through litigation.

2. Subcommittees and Their Tasks

a. Philosophy and Objectives. (Not negotiable) The subgroup on philosophy and objectives has the responsibility of developing a clear, concise statement outlining the purposes of TPE in the district, a list of objectives to be accomplished and to specify the education methodology inherent in the district's philosophy, e.g., individualized instruction, discovery/inquiry, "back to basics," etc. This committee should start first and its philosophic premises should be fed back to all parties for ideas, rebuttal, recommendations and change. Once determined, these premises should guide the work of all subgroups and shape the final prototype of the evaluation system.

b. Performance Areas and Criteria. (Not negotiable) The second subgroup has as its major task the delineation of broad performance areas for which performance criteria must be drawn. Example of performance areas are teaching techniques and classroom management. Much more will be said about this subgroup's task in a moment.

c. Operational Procedures. (Negotiable) These must be written by the third subcommittee. The step-by-step process ought to be indicated with clear instructions created regarding who is to serve as evaluators, lengths of the cycle, observation and conferencing steps and means of providing for improvement of teacher performance.

d. Forms and Records. (Not negotiable) The evaluation forms and the evaluation instrument itself are not negotiable. This fourth subgroup should strive for efficiency in the system. A most certain lament of evaluators in the test-and-try year is "it takes seven-to-ten hours per teacher!" Thus the forms and records group should develop materials which will provide for recording of observed teaching behaviors, specify goals, objectives and teaching/learning strategies used; tabulation of periodic evaluations and ratings; notation of performance improvement targets set and evidence of attainment of those objectives and assessment of results achieved.

e. Dissemination, Implementation, Training and Pilot-testing. Custom-tailoring and evaluation system for your district is essentially a cut-and-try procedure. Consequently, it is helpful if one component of the evaluation committee addresses itself to the problem of trying out the new system under ideal and controlled conditions. They should make sure that all involved have been kept informed, evaluators have been prepared to use the system and that a tryout is provided in sample schools or with a 15-30 percent sample of all teachers. Experiences thus gained may prove valuable in making modifications or revisions in the evaluation system before instituting the evaluation program in the school district as a whole.

Changes in the evaluation criteria would not have to be negotiated (i.e., criteria are non-negotable) but change in the operational procedures would have to be negotiated before any changes are made.

Orientation to the evaluation system will be a continuing necessity. Evaluation committee members frequently comment on the difficulty of keeping everyone informed. Audiotutorial packages, handbooks, group orientation sessions and individual orientation between the teacher and the evaluator are all essential. Nonetheless, expect the tryout year refrain, "I don't understand--no one ever told me!" This is not an evaluatee's copout; instead, it is a routine symptom of "first-year-itis."

One last methodological tip--be sure to check with your legal counsel before implementing the prototypic system to be sure that procedural and substantive due process of law are provided for evaluatees and evaluators. Also, legal counsel and the IASB can assist in making a determination as to what is criteria (non-negotiable) and procedure (negotiable). The guidelines provided by SF 205 are rather general; however, ruling case law has become very specific. The state office of the Iowa Association of School Boards and their general counsel will also advise you as to legal dos and don'ts. It would be tragic to negate the effect of an essentially sound TPE system by the inclusion of a few ill-thought-out criteria or procedures.

What Shall Be Our Criteria of Desired Teacher Performance?

Much of the effort involved in developing a sound TPE system centers on the selection of performance criteria. This is managements prerogative, and criteria should not be negotiated. This is not to say they should not be discussed with teacher leaders outside the negotiation process. Typically school districts will establish one set of criteria for each of the following: classroom teachers, counselors, librarian/media specialists, nurses and each type of administrator. We will be concerned only with teacher criteria here, although the intellectual processes needed for criteria specification and the problems encountered are remarkably similar for each classification. What we are doing is "specifying the rules of the game" or selecting the "yardstick of excellence in performance." Success criteria are interrelated, they are not discrete entities. In other words, a teacher may "show respect for his or her students" to a high degree and we would agree that such behavior is to be prized--but he or she must also be able to "present materials in a well orgainzed fashion" and "monitor and evaluate pupil progress" or little will be accomplished in the classroom.

Four different approaches to criteria development have been tried by the ISU team, no doubt many more exist. Each way requires time for serious thought and discussion.

1. The General Job Description

This approach is designed to identify the essential elements in the job, such as preparational requirements, technical skills needed, instructional and non-instructional duties, supervisory help provided, criteria to be used in evaluating pupil achievement, district-wide objectives, etc.

2. Standards of Successful Performance

Examples would be: adequacy in subject taught, ability to translate knowledge into learning, skill at varying objectives, content and learner activities in order to individualize instruction.

3. Job Expectancies Which Uniquely Fit a Particular Assignment

Consider, for example, the case of a school serving all inner-city pupils. Key expectations might include: understanding of social conditions in which pupils live, recognition of the implications of learning disabilities of individual pupils, tolerance for cultural shock, ability to communicate with ethnic group parents, ability to gain job satisfaction in working with disadvantaged youth.

4. Characteristics of the Successful Teacher

Still another way to develop a list of criteria is to concentrate on what a successful teacher should be. Representative qualities might include: developing teacher-learner rapport, identifying learner needs, constructing appropriate objectives and keeping instruction to these objectives, monitoring learning progress and adjusting pace and redundancy accordingly.

No matter which approach is used, the evaluation committee should consider whether the criteria are valid (measure performance that relates to good learning), reliable (produce the same results each time) and are legally discriminating; that is,

each criterion separates teachers of high and low performance. Research at Iowa State University has produced a pool of such items.[2] The 30 items in the following openfaced table are illustrative of that pool. Each of the items in the pool appears to fall into one of five rubrics descriptive of teacher behavior; namely, productive teaching techniques, positive interpersonal relations, orgainized/structured class management, intellectual stimulation and desirable out-of-class behavior. The performance rating items are placed in order of discriminatory power under each rubric. These items and rubrics might be used as a starting place for your committee's deliberations.

[2]Richard Manatt, Kenneth Palmer and Everett Hidlebaugh. "Teacher Performance Evaluation with Improved Rating Scales," The Bulletin, National Association of Secondary Schools Principals, Reston, Va., Vol. 60, No. 401, September, 1976. pp. 21-24.

Discriminating Evaluation Items

Productive Teaching Techniques

1. The teacher uses probing questions for understanding of concepts, relationships and for feedback to the teacher.
2. The teacher uses student ideas in instruction.
3. The teacher uses structuring comments such as examples to serve as advance organizers.
4. The teacher uses varied teaching strategies and materials which stimulate student learning.
5. The teacher explains things well; puts ideas across logically and orderly.
6. The teacher provides opportunities for pupils to learn material that they will later be tested on.

Positive Interpersonal Relations

1. The teacher shows respect for his/her pupils.
2. The teacher is tolerant of students who have ideas different from his/hers.
3. The teacher uses supportive criticism rather than blame, shame or sarcasm.
4. The teacher is readily available to students.
5. The teacher is fair, impartial, and objective in treatment of pupils.
6. The teacher provides opportunities for all pupils to attain success.

Organized/Structured Class Management

1. The teacher constantly monitors pupils' progress and adjusts the pace accordingly.
2. The teacher presents material in a well-organized fashion in order to use class time efficiently.
3. The teacher has well defined objectives for his/her pupils, and is working toward them.
4. The teacher uses pupil assignments which are relevant and in sufficient amount for depth learning.
5. The teacher is businesslike and task-oriented in behavior.
6. The teacher keeps the "difficulty level of instruction" appropriate for each individual.

Intellectual Stimulation

1. The teacher inspires students to seek more knowledge on the subject.
2. The teacher is an exciting, vibrant person.
3. The teacher is enthusiastic.
4. The teacher sustains pupil attention and response with activities appropriate to the pupils' levels.
5. The teacher makes classwork interesting.
6. The teacher and pupils share in the enjoyment of humorous situations.

Desirable Out-Of-Class Behavior

1. The teacher is a good team worker.
2. The teacher strives for improvement through positive participation in professional growth activities.
3. The teacher assumes responsibilities outside the classroom as they relate to school.
4. The teacher is committed to the primary goal of assisting pupil growth.
5. The teacher utilizes community resources in instruction.
6. The teacher reports pupil progress to parents in an effective manner.

Criteria such as these are ordinarily used after classroom observations and conferences with the appraisee in the form of rating items in a five-point scale (the teacher being appraised always behaves this way/never behaves this way). Preliminary norming experience with scale indicates that these 30 items are adequate to discriminate between teachers of high, medium and low performance. Indeed, the six items relating to out-of-class behavior could be dropped with little loss in efficiency; however, many school patrons insist that they are "important."

How High Shall Our Standards Be?

Repeated empirical tests with the 30-item instrument suggest that an initial pilot year should be used to establish a benchmark of teacher performance. Individualized, departmental, building, and district-wide norms should be developed and studied carefully by all parties. Subsequently, levels of "expected performance" may then be set. Legal counsel in several states has recommended that a three-point response is desirable in the event of litigation because of teacher dismissal: namely, "1. Superior Performance; 2. Meets District's Standard; 3. Unacceptable Performance." This approach avoids the nebulous "sometimes" or "undecided" midpoint of a five-choice array.

The key person in setting standards "high" is the principal. If he or she stresses excellence, is really knowledgeable about teaching methodology, and views the principal's job as giving constant coaching for improvement, standards can and will be high. However, giving negative feedback to the evaluatee (or any feedback for that matter) is often a new and unpredicatable experience for the principals and teachers of many districts. Often there is an all-too-human tendency to overrate the teacher's performance, thereby avoiding "heat" and limiting any continued interaction with the teacher needing improvement. Such avoidance behavior on the part of the first-line supervisor even has a name, it is called "Ceremonial Congratulations." It manifests itself by teacher evaluations with all "excellent" or "superior" ratings, lowlevel or easy job improvement targets being set for the next cycle and a tacit agreement by both evaluator and evaluatee "not to rock the boat." Not surprisingly, teachers, board members and other more conscientious school administrators have only contempt for such bungling principals and supervisors.

How Shall Performance be Measured and Reported?

The process of the performance evaluation cycle will vary depending upon the ratio of appraisers to appraisees, stipulations negotiated, the skill of the appraiser and school district policies. Nonetheless, procedural due process and sound supervisory practice suggest at the very least:

1. Self-appraisal for familiarization and preparation for the postconference.

2. Preobservation conferences to discuss instructional objectives, methods and the learners.

3. Classroom observations--two or three periods per cycle.

4. Postobservation conferences to discuss critical classroom incidents, progress and to exchange questions.

5. Agreement on a plan of action.

6. Time to improve, help to improve and mutual (appraiser-appraisee) monitoring of change.

7. Report of the summary evaluation to appraisee and to superiors.

We recommend that the Operational Procedures subcommittee consider and resolve the following issues:

1. Will all teachers be evaluated in the same manner? Iowa law stipulates a two-year probationary period for beginners (extendable to three years by mutual consent).

2. How frequently should teachers be evaluated, observed, counseled? Could a partial evaluation be provided each year (concluding around February 15) with a total evaluation used each third year?

3. Must the timetable of accomplishment be the same for every teacher? If the preevaluation conferences are all held in October and all postevaluation conferences in February, work tends to pile up at two points, swamping the principals with evaluation tasks.

4. Who are to be the data gathers? Are principals solely responsible? Can some information be gathered by vice principals, curriculum directors, other administration, student ratings, peer feedback, instructional specialists? Can some out-of-district help be obtained, such as AEA consultants?

5. How will evaluations be used? Will the purpose be to determine the level of individual performance or will it also be to assess academic excellence in the school district or other purposes. Will any effort be made to consolidate evaluations in order to plan inservice education programs? (This may have implications in the negotiated agreement for the use which can be made of the evaluation, and also may influence whether the evaluation will be subject to the grievance procedure). What of merit pay, reduction in force or dismissal? Remember SF 205 dictates that the individual teacher will be given access to his or her entire personnel record (in that district) in the event of dismissal proceedings. It is vital that these determinations be made at the outset.

6. How may dissatisfied teachers or administrators "appeal" unsatisfactory evaluations? (We do not believe the grievance machinery is appropriate.)

<u>How Shall We Help Teachers Improve Performance After Evaluation</u>?

Unless you intend to use TPE as strictly a weed-out procedure this is where "the rubber meets the road." Most teacher performance evaluation experts agree that helping the teacher improve is the key element in using evaluation to improve instruction. A potent tool for this activity is the "performance improvement target."

The use of three to six improvement targets has proven to be an effective way to focus a teacher's efforts to raise instructional productivity following the performance evaluation cycle. The rating scale profile will identify "generalized" teacher-improvement goals, but these are too broad, <u>e.g.</u>, "tell the students what your objectives are."

To develop this into an improvement target it will be necessary to:
1. Use the goal to state what it is you want the teacher to do.

2. Set a time limit in which the teacher is expected to reach the objective, and

3. Decide the criteria used to measure a teacher's success in reaching the target.

Using these methods the improvement target becomes: During the next two units taught in this semester, the teacher will periodically ask the students to paraphrase their understanding of the objective(s). At least monthly, the teacher will include a question or two on a written exam to see how well the students can verbalize the objectives.

Regardless of the length of the cycle, the coaching-and-counseling steps (via improvement targets) include:
1. Establish specific job targets (suggested by observations, conferences, evaluation).

2. Agree on a plan of action.

3. Clarify roles and responsibilities (What will evaluatee, evaluator and others such as curriculum specialists do to reach the targets?).

4. Commitment of teacher and evaluator to reach targets.

5. Self-evaluation by teacher.

6. Assessment report by evaluator.

7. Conference.

8. Systematic followup (and evaluation cycle starts again).

Overview

The entire process of performance evaluation is dynamic and, for the supervisors involved, neverending. Appraisal and feedback is the quintessence of the administrator's role--yet to do it well teachers and lay persons must of necessity be involved. Thus every three to five years all parties (in a representative manner) must reconsider district goals, values, expectations and productivity. As these change the evaluation processes and priorities must change.

Not all districts will need to develop a new system to satisfy SF 205. It is a good bet, however, that all Iowa districts can enhance what exists by considering the components described herein and by giving skills training for those designated to be evaluators. Board members and superintendents personaliy should avail themselves of every opportunity to become more knowledgeable about performance: first because the new Iowa law places new responsibilities on them; second, and much more important, because improved evaluation procedures enhance quality education for Iowa's children.